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**To:** DWR IRWM Grants

**Cc:** 'Greg Farley'; 'Jeannie Habben'; 'John Reed'

**Subject:** Comments from IRWM Program Workshop

Hi Joe and Tracy: Thanks again for presenting the workshop about the IRWM program in Fresno last week. Here are the comments I discussed during the meeting, plus some additional thoughts:

Regional Acceptance Process – I proposed that regions that are already in place and working well together be allowed to go through an expedited process for acceptance of their 'region' by DWR. This could be accomplished by having the region write up a description of their stakeholders, their processes, their activities, and the scope of their planning to date. The region could then set up a stakeholder meeting that could be attended by the DWR staff. If everything looks okay, you could recommend acceptance of the region. Of course, this could also be an opportunity for you to give us suggestions and feedback on new issues, planning or strategies that you think would be useful to our situation. This could be accomplished in a significantly shorter time period than that which you are currently contemplating.

Also, let me recommend an expansion of your proposed management/governance TA program for regions that are having difficulty. In Madera County we are doing pretty well in stakeholder involvement, however we are taking advantage of DWR's contract with the Center for Collaborative Policy to further improve collaborative relationships and develop an effective management and governance program. It might be a good idea to make this available on an expanded basis for regions which want to deal with the management/governance issues pro-actively.

Regional Flood Management Planning funds – At the meeting I discussed Madera County's difficulty in finding funds to do a 'benefit assessment' study for their flood management system. This study is a pre-requisite to forming a Benefit Assessment District, which would provide funding to match grants and perform maintenance necessary for upgrading the flood control system. You asked me to justify how this could help foster development of regional flood planning efforts. Essentially, the benefit assessment study looks at the potential improvements to the flood management system and analyzes their costs. It then analyzes the properties which would be the chief beneficiaries of the improvements and helps to determine the relative benefits. The identification of potential flood management improvements and their costs clearly helps to foster regional flood management planning. The assessment of relative benefit could be considered part of the analysis of potential sources of funding which is an important part of an effective management plan. We strongly urge you to include this type of study as an eligible expenditure in both the IRWM and the RFM flood management planning funding that will be made available in the near future.

Prop 1E Stormwater-Flood Management – One of the major flood management problems in Madera County is eradication of Arundo, an invasive bamboo that chokes up the waterways. The FloodSafe program has deemed Arundo a 'maintenance' problem, and doesn't provide any funding for its eradication under their grant program. There are almost no other sources of funding for this problem. We strongly urge you to include Arundo eradication as an eligible cost in your 1E stormwater management grants. I'd be happy to provide a more extensive argument about why this should be done if you think it will be helpful.

Also, you discussed the various possible program priorities for the IE funding. One of these is 'projects with the highest flood damage reduction'. This is already a priority in most of the other programs that provide flood management funding. That makes it very difficult for rural areas such as the Central Valley to compete for this funding. Yet areas where the dollar value of flood damage is low still need funding to prevent flood disasters for the residents and activities that

take place in these regions. I think it would be good to have one program where the playing field was more level between urban and non-urban areas.

I hope you find this helpful.

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